

Friday, May 2, 2025

Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0478

Contact details

Name:

Mayor Jules Radich

Organisation (if applicable):

Dunedin City Council

Do you wish to speak to your submission at a public hearing?

☒ Yes

Topic 1: Are we focusing on the right things in the plan?

Topic 2: Should we support community transport services in smaller towns and rural areas?

Our proposal: we are considering the establishment of a subsidised community transport programme providing support for transport services in Otago's smaller towns and rural areas.

What do you think about this proposal?

Topic 3: Should we increase our passenger fares?

Our proposal: we are considering increasing the base fare for adult Bee Card passengers from \$2 to \$2.50. This would effectively increase bus fares for all passengers using Bee Cards by 25%.

What do you think about this proposal?

Topic 4: Should we charge more for longer trips?

Our proposal: we are considering introducing a zone fare system to our bus networks in Dunedin and Queenstown. Under this system, passengers travelling further distances across multiple zones will pay a higher fare than those travelling short distances within one zone.

What do you think about this proposal?

Topic 5: Should we keep our free fares for children (5-12 years)?

Our proposal:

- A. Retain free fares (100% discount) for children (5-12 years), **AND**
- B. Standardise our concession discount for youth (13-18 years) to 40% across both the Dunedin and Queenstown networks. For example, if the adult fare is \$2, youth pay \$1.20, or if the adult fare is \$2.50, youth pay \$1.50.

What do you think about this proposal?

Any other comments?

1 May 2025

RPTP Submissions
Otago Regional Council
Private Bag 1954
Dunedin 9054

Kia ora

Draft Otago Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035

- 1 Dunedin City Council (DCC) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Otago Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) 2025-2035. Dunedin is the largest population centre in Otago and an important destination for the wider region. Dunedin has the highest number of public transport trips in the region and is host to multiple key regional services including tertiary institutions and the largest hospital in the lower South Island.
- 2 The DCC supports the priorities and principles within the document and acknowledges the collaborative approach that the Otago Regional Council (ORC) has taken in developing the document, with DCC and the other territorial authorities across Otago.
- 3 The DCC also appreciates the support and partnership of the ORC on transport initiatives and acknowledges the ongoing partnership within the Zero Carbon Alliance.
- 4 The DCC has identified four aspects where we are seeking further consideration within the RPTP.
 - a) The DCC believes there should be greater emphasis placed on network and service planning in Dunedin, including considerations around school services, the Bus Hub and existing transport infrastructure.
 - b) The DCC would like to see greater action and emphasis on increasing patronage, through promotion and marketing of the services.
 - c) The DCC would like to see further emphasis placed on emissions reduction through the RPTP, including investigations into commuter services for regional centres in Otago.
 - d) The DCC would like to request ORC investigates service improvement options for the Northern Coast, and for the Central City.

Network and Service Planning in Dunedin

- 5 The Draft RPTP lists Dunedin as a medium-to low-growth city with a mature public transport network, and notes that any changes relating to this network will be focused on enhancing existing service areas. It is DCC's view that this commentary does not reflect the demand on the network in Dunedin or the potential for further patronage growth, and the RPTP is instead focusing on serving the growth in Central Otago.
- 6 It is DCC's view that there should be a stronger focus on network and service planning within Dunedin, addressing the challenges and limitations of the existing network, as well as opportunities for improvement.
- 7 The DCC has invested heavily in improving public transport infrastructure in recent years. To acknowledge the work undertaken and enable ongoing improvements, DCC recommends a network review be undertaken, to provide certainty about future routes and bus stops.
 - a) Undertaking a network review would provide a holistic understanding of where changes should be made to benefit the community, and the efficiency of the network.
 - b) A network review could be undertaken on a route basis, making incremental changes over a longer period, rather than trying to identify all issues on the network at one time. This could be managed through the procurement process when tendering new contracts.
- 8 The DCC requests the following be considered as part of the network review:
 - a) A review of existing routes and their timetables, bus stop spacing and utilisation, transfers and options for high-frequency corridors that could be implemented in the shorter term.
 - b) A review of the Dunedin Bus Hub, to identify potential constraints with location or capacity, with focus on the changes forecasted in the RPTP. As part of reviewing the Bus Hub, the DCC recommends consideration for how timetable modifications may impact operations.
 - c) A review of how schools are served utilising the existing urban network, and whether there are changes required to timetables, transfer options, or frequency, to better suit the needs of school students. As part of this, consideration should be given to the passenger capacity on these routes, and whether this is sufficient to meet demand.
 - d) Consideration of whether the new depot on Portsmouth Drive provides an opportunity to implement a new bus stop/transfer point for passengers, particularly in the context of the location of the Edgar Centre to the new depot.

Promotion

- 9 The DCC notes that there are limited actions relating to promotion of the service across the region. While DCC acknowledges the challenging funding environment that currently exists, promotion of public transport is paramount in growing patronage, reducing emissions, and reducing reliance on private vehicles.
- 10 The DCC acknowledges there has been a range of improvements for passengers in recent years, and alongside an increase in promotion of the service, we would like to see further development on the real time information available to passengers across the network.

- 11 As part of promoting public transport, DCC recommends additional actions be included around collaboration with DCC. This is an important aspect of our Connecting Dunedin partnership and DCC would like to see stronger initiative from ORC working with DCC's sustainable travel team on public transport initiatives – including school travel planning.

Emissions Reduction

- 12 The DCC sees the provision of effective public transport services as critical to enabling greater transport choices for residents and reducing transport emissions. As set out in the DCC's Zero Carbon Plan, achieving a substantial reduction in the city's emissions requires significant and sustained growth in public transport use. The DCC is committed to supporting the ORC to develop public transport services that are convenient and attractive (and subsequently used) which will help achieve emission reduction goals. Increasing use of public transport is particularly important in suburbs where residents have longer commute times.
- 13 The DCC continues to encourage and support:
- a) ORC involvement in pre-application and consent processes for major subdivisions and developments to maximise potential integration with the public transport network
 - b) Planned shifts to low emission vehicles for contracted public transport services
 - c) Improved connections between modes, including at key transfer locations such as the Dunedin Bus Hub.
- 14 The DCC requests the following options be considered, which would contribute towards achieving the DCC's Zero Carbon Plan:
- a) Options for commuter services for residents of Ōamaru and Balclutha
 - b) Options for implementing a Dunedin Airport service, operated by ORC
 - c) Options for servicing the Edgar Centre, in particular to meet the needs of students travelling to after-school activities.

Areas for Service Implementation or Investigation

- 15 The DCC notes the extent of the plan to introduce changes over the next ten years through the RPTP.
- 16 In addition to the options for services aligning with DCC's Zero Carbon Plan, the DCC also requests the following be considered in addition the planned network changes:
- a) Options for a Central City Loop bus to complement existing services, including whether there is scope for this to be commercially operated to increase private share revenue
 - b) Options to increase frequency of service to the North Coast, including services to Waitati.

General Consultation Questions

Topic 1: Are we focusing on the right things in the plan?

- 17 The DCC agrees that the focus areas within the plan capture Otago's transport priorities.

Topic 2: Should we support community transport services in smaller towns and rural areas?

- 18 The DCC agrees that ORC should have a role in supporting regional community transport services.
- 19 Dunedin is a primary centre for the smaller towns and rural areas, and providing access to essential services is something important for ORC to support. Currently many people in regional centres need to access healthcare in Dunedin, but have limited transport options to do so, with most people reliant on private transport.
- 20 Many residents from as far as Ōamaru and Balclutha also actively commute to Dunedin. The DCC supports an investigation into demand for commuter services from these communities in time for the next RPTP.

Topic 3: Should we increase our passenger fares?/ Topic 4: Should we charge more for longer trips?

- 21 The DCC acknowledges there is pressure from central government around Public Transport Authorities (PTAs) increasing their private share contribution.
- 22 The DCC wants to work with ORC to keep fares low, which aligns with DCC targets for lowering emissions and increasing mode shift. Fares are a key driver for mode shift, and keeping low fares helps make public transport affordable and accessible.

Topic 5: Should we keep our free fares for children (5-12 years)?

- 23 The DCC supports ORC retaining free fares for children ages 5-12 years.
- 24 Enabling and promoting children to use the bus from a young age helps foster confidence with using public transport and is likely to build lifelong habits. Supporting children to travel on public transport can reduce pressure on caregivers, helping reduce reliance on private vehicles at school gates (as an example).
- 25 The DCC supports ORC standardising the concession discount for youth aged 13-18 years.

Conclusion

- 26 The DCC appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft RPTP 2025-2035. We encourage ORC to consider the points raised in this submission, to help enable the ongoing growth and success of the Dunedin Public Transport network.
- 27 The DCC looks forward to continuing its collaboration with ORC to deliver on the actions outlined in the draft RPTP.

Kā mihi

